

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAABAD
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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 KABUL 7560

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, CASC, EAID, EINV, ETRD, MORG, PDIP, PGOV, SCUL, SNAR, AF
SUBJ: STATUS OF U.S. PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: KABUL 5370

1. SUMMARY: SINCE THE LEFTIST COUP OF APRIL 27, U.S. PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE GENERALLY EXPERIENCED SETBACKS. NEARLY EVERY AGENCY AND EMBASSY SECTION REPORTS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN, ON BALANCE, MORE NEGATIVE THAN POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN THEIR AREAS OF ACTIVITY. WHILE MANY OF THESE SETBACKS STEM SIMPLY FROM THE DISRUPTION CAUSED BY THE CHANGE IN GOVT, OTHERS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE IDEOLOGICAL COLORATION OF THE NEW REGIME. THE SINGLE MOST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN THE SALE OF A DC-10 PACKAGE WORTH \$55 MILLION TO ARIANA AFGHAN AIRLINES CONDITIONAL HOWEVER ON SOME EXIM BANK FINANCING. END SUMMARY.

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2. HERE FOLLOWS A REPORT ON THE STATUS OF U.S. PROGRAMS IN EIGHT AREAS:

A) EXPORT PROMOTION AND U.S. INVESTMENT. WHILE THE MOST HEARTENING DEVELOPMENT IS THE \$55 MILLION SALE OF A DC-10 PACKAGE TO ARIANA, THIS SALE IS CONDITIONAL ON SOME EX-IM BANK FINANCING. AS OF THE

DATE OF THIS MESSAGE, NO WASHINGTON DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN ON ARIANA'S APPLICATION. SOME OTHER SALES OPPORTUNITIES MAY ALSO EXIST, AGAIN MOSTLY DEPENDING ON FOREIGN FINANCING, NOTABLY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CEMENT PLANT AND A SATELLITE EARTH STATION, AND FOR A HOTEL MANAGEMENT TRAINING CONTRACT.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INVESTMENT FIELD HAVE BEEN LARGELY NEGATIVE. THE SECOND LARGEST U.S. INVESTOR IN THE COUNTRY, INDAMER TRADING COMPANY, WAS ORDERED LAST JULY TO CEASE OPERATIONS AND MAY BE UNABLE TO MEET ITS ASSESSED TAX ARREARS. OUR SINGLE LARGEST INVESTOR, PAN AMERICAN, WITH A 49 PERCENT STAKE IN ARIANA, AND A STAKE, TOO, IN THE HOTEL INTER-CONTINENTAL KABUL, IS CONCERNED OVER ITS LONG-TERM FUTURE AND LOW PROFIT LEVEL. THE ONE NEW INVESTMENT IMMINENT AT THE TIME OF THE COUP, NAMELY A CITIES SERVICES OIL EXPLORATION CONTRACT, HAS SEEMINGLY BEEN INDEFINITELY SHELVED BY THE GOVT.

OVERALL, U.S. TRADE AND INVESTMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SMALL. EXPORTS PRIOR TO THIS YEAR WERE RUNNING ABOUT \$20 MILLION PER ANNUM, ABOUT HALF OF THIS PROBABLY BEING USAID OR PL-480 FINANCED. HENCE, A DC-10 SALE WOULD MORE THAN DOUBLE OUR NORMAL EXPORT LEVEL. U.S. INVESTMENTS ARE WORTH ABOUT \$7 MILLION IN BOOK VALUE. AFGHANISTAN'S DEBT TO THE U.S. GOVT IS \$105 MILLION.

B) USAID ACTIVITIES. USAID OBLIGATIONS FOR FY78, AT \$5 MILLION, WILL BE THE LOWEST IN AT LEAST A DECADE. THE ONLY AID PROJECT AGREEMENT SIGNED SINCE THE COUP WAS A \$3 MILLION ADDITIONAL
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PROGRAM FOR THE HEL AND.

BEFORE THE COUP, IT WAS OUR HOPE THAT USAID EXPENDITURES COULD INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY -- FROM THE \$20 MILLION ANNUAL LEVEL OF RECENT YEARS, TO \$50 MILLION BY FY83. EXPANDED PROGRAMS IN HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, AND EDUCATION WERE IN THE WORKS. SEVERAL OF THESE -- NOTABLY AN EXPANDED RURAL HEALTH PROGRAM AND A WHEAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT -- HAVE ENCOUNTERED MAJOR OBSTACLES. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE RECEIVED FIRM REQUESTS FOR SEVERAL NEW PROJECTS. ON BALANCE, THE SIGNALS REGARDING FUTURE USAID PROGRAMS ARE STILL MIXED, BUT GENERALLY THE REGIME WISHES CAPITAL AND EQUIPMENT AND LIMITED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

ASIDE FROM THE PROSPECTS FOR INDIVIDUAL USAID PROJECTS, THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY DEVELOPED BY USAID BEFORE THE REVOLUTION IS OBSOLETE AND WILL HAVE TO BE REVISED. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE INTENTION OF THE GOVT IS TO PROVIDE DONORS WITH A LIST OF FIVE-YEAR PLAN PROJECTS, FROM WHICH DONORS WILL BE ASKED TO PICK THOSE THEY WANT TO FINANCE.

C) ICA ACTIVITIES. LIKE USAID, ICA IS HAVING ITS SHARE OF DIFFICULTIES. THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM AREA HAS BEEN THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

INVOLVING AFGHAN AND AMERICAN SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS. BECAUSE OF CONDITIONS LAID DOWN BY THE NEW GOVT, THE FUTURE OF THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM IS UNCERTAIN. ALMOST NO AFGHAN SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS ARE NOW BEING PERMITTED TO GO PRIVATELY TO THE U.S., WHILE IMPEDIMENTS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THE WAY OF THEIR SELECTION FOR FULBRIGHT GRANTS. ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN SCHOLARS IN AFGHANISTAN (DOWN TO 7 FROM ABOUT 12 BEFORE THE COUP) HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED. LONG-TIME AMERICAN UNIVERSITY FIELD SERVICES RESIDENT, LOUIS DUPREE, HAS IN EFFECT BEEN EXPELLED.

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AS FOR OTHER ICA PROGRAMS, THE AMERICAN CENTER WITH ITS LIBRARY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM (ENROLLMENT 1,000), CONTINUES UNHAMPERED AND IS WELL UTILIZED. VISITING SPEAKERS ARE STILL ABLE TO COME, ALTHOUGH THE UNIVERSITY HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE TO THEIR PRESENCE. SCHEDULED CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS ARE NOT BEING CURTAILED AND AUDIENCES ARE STILL GOOD. WE HAVE ALSO HAD SOME SMALL SUCCESSES IN GETTING MATERIALS INTO THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS AND TV.

D) PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES. AMONG OUR PROGRAMS, PEACE CORPS HAS BEEN ONE OF THOSE HARDEST HIT. THE NUMBER OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS (PCVS) HAS DROPPED 40 PERCENT, FROM 91 AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION, TO A PRESENT TOTAL OF 54. MORALE AMONG THE VOLUNTEERS

WAS PARTICULARLY POOR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE REVOLUTION, BUT HAS IMPROVED IN RECENT MONTHS. PRE-COUP REQUESTS FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS WERE NOT RENEWED BY THE NEW GOVT, BUT SUBSEQUENTLY THE GOVT
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SUBMITTED REQUESTS FOR 19 VOLUNTEERS, MOST OF THEM FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH MINISTRY. THESE ARE GENERALLY FOR HIGHLY SKILLED, HARD-TO-RECRUIT PERSONS. UNLESS THE GOVT COMES FORWARD WITH ADDITIONAL REQUESTS, THE PEACE CORPS WILL SHRINK BY NEXT SPRING TO ABOUT 35 VOLUNTEERS, THE LOWEST NUMBER SINCE THE PEACE CORPS BEGAN OPERATIONS HERE IN 1962.

AT THE TIME OF THE COUP, ALL BUT THREE PCVS WERE STATIONED IN KABUL. GIVEN THE SENSITIVITY OF THE NEW GOVT TO WESTERNERS RESIDING OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL, WE HAD FEARED THAT THE THREE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PCVS STATIONED IN KANDAHAR AND TASHKURGHAN WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN THERE AFTER SCHOOL SUMMER RECESS. THIS HAS NOT TRANSPIRED. THE THREE HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO GO BACK AND HAVE RESUMED TEACHING. WE DOUBT, THOUGH, THAT THESE POSITIONS WILL BE REFILLED WHEN THEIR PRESENT CONTRACTS EXPIRE THIS WINTER AND NEXT SPRING.

WHEREAS IN THE PAST, THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION WERE THE GOVT AGENCIES MOST USING PCVS, SINCE THE COUP NEITHER MINISTRY HAS SHOWN MUCH INTEREST IN THE PEACE CORPS.

E) DEFENSE ATTACHE PROGRAMS. THIS PROGRAM AREA HAS EXPERIENCED SEVERE SETBACKS. THE ATTACHE AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN REFUSED PERMISSION TO FLY TO POINTS IN-COUNTRY AND CAN NOW ONLY BE USED TO TRANSPORT THE AMBASSADOR IN AND OUT OF AFGHANISTAN. THE SECOND SETBACK IS THE RESTRICTION PLACED ON IN-COUNTRY TRAVEL BY DEFENSE ATTACHE PERSONNEL. SUCH PERSONS ARE NOW REQUIRED TO GIVE 21 DAYS ADVANCE NOTICE WHEN TRAVELING WITHIN THE COUNTRY. THIS OSTENSIBLY APPLIES TO ALL FOREIGN ATTACHES RESIDENT IN AFGHANISTAN. THE GOVT HAS ALSO SEVERELY RESTRICTED SOCIAL AND OTHER CONTACTS BETWEEN ATTACHE PERSONNEL AND AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICERS.

LASTLY, OUR MODEST MILITARY-TRAINING-IN-THE-U.S. PROGRAM HAS BEEN ALL BUT SUSPENDED FOR THE MOMENT. UNDER THIS PROGRAM, WE WERE
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SENDING 20-30 AFGHAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE OFFICERS ANNUALLY TO THE U.S. FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF TRAINING, SOME FOR AS LONG AS A YEAR. THE GOVT WAS UNABLE TO FILL SOME 6 REMAINING SLOTS AVAILABLE FOR FY78 AND HAS RECENTLY TOLD US IT ALSO CANNOT SUPPLY CANDIDATES TO FILL THE FIRST 4 SLOTS FOR FY79. MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS EXPLAIN THAT THIS SUSPENSION OF FOREIGN TRAINING APPLIES TO ALL

COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE USSR, INDIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND FRANCE,
AND IS BEING DONE TO CONSERVE FOR USE IN-COUNTRY ALL REMAINING
NON-PURGED OFFICERS.

F) DEA ACTIVITIES. KABUL HAS A TWO-AGENT DEA OFFICE, AND ITS
ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY IS AT THE MOMENT
UNCLEAR. BEFORE THE COUP, THE AGENTS ENJOYED AN UNOFFICIAL
BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AFGHAN GOVT, NOMINALLY VIA
THE RESIDENT UN NARCOTICS OFFICE. SINCE THE COUP, DEA HAS NOT
SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING DIRECT CONTACT WITH ANY AFGHAN GOVT
ELEMENT.

THE DEA-FUNDED INFORMANT-REWARD PAYMENTS SYSTEM, FORMERLY
CHANNELED THROUGH THE LOCAL UN NARCOTICS OFFICE, HAS ALSO COME
TO A STANDSTILL. DEA IS HOPEFUL, NEVERTHELESS, THAT IN THE FUTURE
A NEW PAYMENTS SYSTEM CAN SOMEHOW BE REESTABLISHED VIA SOME SORT OF
UN WINDOW DRESSING.

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CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

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AS IN PRE-COUP TIMES, DEA'S INTELLIGENCE GATHERING PROGRAM CON-
TINUES WITHOUT GOVT INTERFERENCE.

IN THE LARGER NARCOTICS FRAMEWORK, THE NEW GOVT IN ITS RHETORIC SEEMS MORE DETERMINED THAN ITS PREDECESSOR TO ELIMINATE POPPY PRODUCTION AND FRAFFICKING. IT APPROVED A LONG-STALLED ANTI-POPPY SIDE-LETTER TO A USAID AGRICULTURAL BANK PROJECT AGREEMENT AND HAS CLEARLY INDICATED IT WANTS FURTHER UN NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE.

G) CONSULAR OPERATIONS. SINCE THE COUP, THE CONSULAR SECTION HAS EXPERIENCED POOR COOPERATION FROM THE CONSULAR DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. EXAMPLES OF THIS RANGE FROM INEPT HANDLING BY THE MINISTRY OF THE SLOAN CASE, TO THE MINISTRY'S INABILITY TO PERFORM SUCH ROUTINE FUNCTIONS AS TO CLEAR THE CREMATED
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REMAINS OF A DECEASED AMERICAN TOURIST FOR AIR SHIPMENT TO THE U.S. MUCH OF THE PROBLEM SEEMINGLY RELATES TO THE LACK OF FOREIGN MINISTRY CLOUT IN SUCH MATTERS WITH OTHER MINISTRIES, ESPECIALLY THE INTERIOR MINISTRY.

PERSONS CONVICTED OF TRYING TO SMUGGLE OUT NARCOTICS CAN NO LONGER EXPECT TO HAVE THEIR PRISON SENTENCES CONVERTED TO FINES. WE FACE THE PROSPECT OF HAVING ARRESTED AMERICANS INCARCERATED FOR LONGER PERIODS THAN IN THE PAST. GENERALLY, WE HAVE ONR OR TWO AMERICANS IN JAIL AT ANY ONE TIME.

ONE OF OUR ONGOING PROBLEMS RELATES TO RESIDENT AMERICAN WOMEN MARRIED TO AFGHANS. THESE WOMEN -- ABOUT 24 BEFORE THE COUP -- HAVE DUAL NATIONALITY BY VIRTUE OF THEIR MARRIAGES. ABOUT HALF HAVE NOW MANAGED TO LEAVE OR PLAN TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. WHEREAS THE GOVT INITIALLY BLOCKED THE EXODUS OF SUCH PERSONS, CLAIMING THEY WERE AFGHAN CITIZENS AND THEREFORE SUBJECT TO THE GENERAL BAN ON AFGHANS TRAVELING ABROAD, THE GOVT HAS RECENTLY RELAXED THIS STRICTURE INSOFAR AS FOREIGN-BORN WIVES ARE CONCERNED. THIS HAS SAVED US FROM WHAT THREATENED TO BECOME A DIFFICULT BILATERAL PROBLEM.

H) EMBASSY OPERATIONS. THE U.S. MISSION'S PHYSICAL OPERATIONS, AND THE ABILITY OF MISSION PERSONNEL TO MOVE ABOUT KABUL AND MOST OF THE COUNTRY, CONTINUE LARGELY UNHAMPERED. NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN THE ARREST ON JULY 27 OF ONE OF OUR SENIOR LOCALS, FOR APPARENTLY INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS, AND THE REFUSAL OF THE GOVT TO ALLOW US TO SEND THREE AFGHAN LOCALS (FROM ICA, USAID, AND THE EMBASSY B&F SECTION) FOR VARIOUS SHORT-TERM TRAINING COURSES IN WASHINGTON AND BANGKOK. ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE ICA EMPLOYEE SUCCEEDED LAST MONTH IN GOING TO THE U.S. FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING, BUT MANAGED THIS BY ESCHEWING OFFICIAL USG HELP AND SECURING PRIVATELY AN AFGHAN PASSPORT.
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WE HAVE LEARNED, TOO, OF THREE RECENT CASES WHERE OUR LOCALS HAVE BEEN PRESSURED BY THE AFGHAN SECURITY AUTHORITIES TO BECOME INFORMANTS. THERE ARE PROBABLY MORE WE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT. OVERT SURVEILLANCE OF THE EMBASSY, ICA, AND USAID IS SPORADIC, BUT SO FAR NOT OPPRESSIVE.

SOME OF OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE FEARFUL THAT THE POLICE MAY ORDER THEM TO LEAVE THEIR JOBS WITH THE USG. OUR TCN'S ON WHOM WE ARE DEPENDENT FOR CERTAIN KEY ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS, ARE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THEIR RESIDENCY IN AFGHANISTAN. NEITHER CATEGORY OF EMPLOYEE LOOKS FORWARD TO THE ANNUAL RENEWAL OF THEIR AFGHAN WORK PERMITS.

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, THE RECENT MOVE OF THE MARINE HOUSE TO ANOTHER LOCATION, AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE GOVT, HAS PROVED A BLESSING. THE NEW RESIDENCE IS MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE THAN THE ONE VACATED. ALSO, ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS BEEN RESPONDING MORE QUICKLY TO OUR ROUTINE ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES, AND THE FINANCE MINISTRY AND CUSTOMS CONTINUE TO COOPERATE VERY WELL ON OUR CLEARANCE NEEDS. THE COMMANDANT OF POLICE HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING, TOO, IN SEVERAL CASES IN MEETING EMBASSY NEEDS, BUT NOT WITH OUR ARRESTED LOCAL.

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SINCE THE COUP, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFICIAL AMERICANS IN COUNTRY, INCLUDING DEPENDENTS AND PEACE CORPS, HAS DROPPED 17 PERCENT FROM 460 TO ABOUT 380.

3. COMMENT: AS THE ABOVE INDICATES, ALL OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN-COUNTRY HAVE ENCOUNTERED SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS SINCE THE COUP. THIS IS NOT MEANT TO SUGGEST THAT BEFORE LAST APRIL WE HAD NO PROBLEMS, BUT RATHER THAT WE HAVE HAD MORE SINCE THE REVOLUTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME OF OUR EARLY FEARS HAVE NOT BEEN REALIZED, SUCH AS EXPULSION OF THE PEACE CORPS AND OUR EMBASSY AIRCRAFT (ALBEIT NOW RESTRICTED), CLOSURE OF OUR ICA AMERICAN CENTER, AND RESTRICTIONS PUT ON PERSONNEL MOVEMENT ABOUT THE COUNTRY (EXCEPT FOR DAO PERSONNEL). THE RESIDENT ASIA FOUNDATION OFFICE ALSO REMAINS, AND HAD BEEN APPROACHED FOR HELP ON FIVE SMALL PROJECTS.

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ALL IN ALL, WE ARE MANAGING TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE IN ALL AREAS OF ACTIVITY, ALTHOUGH SOME LIKE DAO, DEA, AND PC HAVE BEEN SEVERELY AFFECTED.

THE FUTURE IS, OF COURSE, VERY CLOUDY WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT AS THIS GOVT CONSOLIDATES ITS POWER AND MOVES CLOSER TO THE SOVIET UNION, SOME OF OUR ACTIVITIES WILL BE FURTHER CURTAILED.
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